



THE STUDENT

OF

JUNIUS

and

TACITUS.

PRICE, 5 cents.

Lemuel Eorden, PUBLISHER, Woodstock, Va.

JUNIUS.

Sir Philip Francis is supposed by many to have the best claim to the authorship of The Letters of JUNIUS, which appeared in a London newspaper—The Public Advertiser. The letters are 44 in number,—also 15 signed Philo Junius,—72 letters on business, &c., and in addition, 113 letters under various signatures. The first of these letters was published January 21, 1769, and the last one of them, bearing a date, is dated January 21, 1772. The style of Junius is of the highest class. Sometimes he rises into the loftiest eloquence. The writings of Junius are remarkable for closeness of argument, felicity of illustration, and allusion, and brilliant epigram. Junius singled out the leading members of the English ministry, boldly denounced their inefficiency and exposed the crimes and follies of their private characters.

The following extracts are from an edition published in 1830, and they are selected as they occur, from the beginning to the end of the volumes.

The submission of a free people to the executive authority of government, is no more than a compliance with laws which they themselves have enacted.

The pure and impartial administration of justice is, perhaps, the firmest bond to secure a cheerful submission of the people, and to engage their affections to government.—Prudence and self-preservation will oblige the most moderate dispositions to make common cause with a man whose conduct they censure, if they see him persecuted in a way which the real spirit of the laws will not justify.

The style and language you have adopted are, I confess, not ill-suited to the elegance of your own manners, or to the dignity of the cause you have undertaken. Every common dumber writes rascal and villain under his pictures, because the pictures themselves have neither character nor resemblance. But the works of a master require no index; his features and coloring are taken from nature; the impression they make is immediate and uniform; nor is it possible to mistake his characters, whether they represent the treachery of a minister, or the abused simplicity of a ——— JUNIUS.

—as you became minister by accident, were adopted without choice, trusted without confidence, and continued without favor, be assured, that whenever an occasion presses, you will be discarded without even the forms of regret.—The learned dullness of declamation will be silent; and even the venal muse, though happiest in fiction, will forget your virtues. Yet for the benefit of the sneering age, I could wish that your retreat might be deferred until your morals shall happily be ripened to that maturity of corruption, at which the worst examples cease to be contagious.

The form and magnitude of a quarto imposes upon the mind; and men, who are unequal to the labor of discussing an intricate argument, or wish to avoid it, are willing enough to suppose that much has been proved, because much has been said. Mine, I confess, are humble labors. I do not presume to instruct the learned, but simply to inform the body of the people; and I prefer that channel of conveyance which is likely to spread farthest among them. The advocates of the ministry seem to me to write for fame, and to flatter themselves, that the size of their works will make them immortal. They pile up reluctant quarto upon solid folio, as if their labors, because they are gigantic, could contend with truth and heaven.

Now, sir, let sophistry evade, let falsehood assert, and impudence deny; here stands the precedent: a landmark to direct us through a troubled sea of controversy, conspicuous and unremoved.

Professions of patriotism are become stale and ridiculous. For my own part, I claim no merit in endeavoring to do a service to my fellow-subjects. I have done it to the best of my understanding; and, without looking for the approbation of other men, my conscience is satisfied.

The time is come when the body of the English people must assert their own cause: conscious of their strength, and animated by a sense of their duty, they will not surrender their birthright to ministers, parliaments, or kings.

We can never be really in danger, until the forms of parliament are made use of to destroy the substance of our civil and political liberties; until parliament itself betrays its trust, by contributing to establish new principles of government, and employing the very weapons committed to it by the collective body to stab the constitution.

Whatever style of contempt may be adopted by ministers or parliaments, no man sincerely despises the voice of the English nation. The house of commons are only interpreters, whose duty it is to convey the sense of the people faithfully to the crown. If the interpretation be false or imperfect, the constituent powers are called upon to deliver their own sentiments. Their speech is rude, but intelligible; their gestures fierce, but full of expression. Perplexed by sophistries, their honest eloquence rises into action. Their first appeal was to the integrity of their representatives; their second, to the king's justice. The last argument of the people, whenever they have recourse to it, will carry more perhaps, than persuasion to parliament, or supplication to the throne.

No man regards an eruption upon the surface, when he feels a mortification approaching to his heart. The free election of our representatives in parliament comprehends, because it is, the source and security of every right and privilege of the English nation. The ministry have realized the compendious ideas of Caligula. They know that the liberty, the laws, and property of an Englishman, have, in truth, but one neck, and to violate the freedom of election, strikes deeply at them all.

To write for profit without taxing the press; to write for fame and be unknown; to support the intrigues of faction, and to be disowned as a dangerous auxiliary by every party in the kingdom, are contradictions which the minister must reconcile before I forfeit my credit with the public.

The government of England is a government of law. We betray ourselves, we contradict the spirit of our laws, and we shake the whole system of English jurisprudence, whenever we entrust a discretionary power over the life, liberty and property of the subject, to any man, or set of men, whatsoever, upon a presumption that it will not be abused.

Private views, however detestable, have not dignity sufficient to attract the censure of the press, unless they are united with the power of doing some signal mischief to the community. If any coarse expressions have escaped me, I am ready to agree that they are unfit for Junius to make use of; but I see no reason to admit that they have been improperly applied.

But is there no honorable way to serve the public, without engaging in personal quarrels with insignificant individuals, or submitting to the drudgery of canvassing votes for an election? Is there no merit in dedicating my life to the information of my fellow-subjects?

With these honorable qualifications, and the decisive advantage of situation, low craft and falsehood are all the abilities that are wanting to destroy the wisdom of ages, and to deface the noblest monument that human policy has erected. I know *such* a man; my lord, I know you both; and, with the blessing of God [for I, too, am religious] the people of England shall know you as well as I do. From whatever origin your influence in this country arises, it is a phenomenon in the history of human virtue and understanding. Good men can hardly believe the fact; wise men are unable to account for it; religious men find exercise for their faith, and make it the last effort of their piety not to repine against Providence.

The man who fairly and completely answers this argument shall have my thanks and my applause. My heart is already with him. I am ready to be converted. I admire his morality, and would gladly subscribe to the articles of his faith. Grateful, as I am, to the *good Being* whose bounty has imparted to me this reasoning intellect, whatever it is, I hold myself proportionately indebted to him from whose enlightened understanding another ray of knowledge communicates to mine. But neither should I think the most exalted faculties of the human mind a gift worthy of the Divinity, nor any assistance in the improvement of them a subject of gratitude to my fellow-creature, if I were not satisfied, that, really, to inform the understanding, corrects and enlarges the heart.

TACITUS.

Tacitus is one of the greatest of historians. In love of truth and integrity of purpose, he is equaled by few; in conciseness of phrase and power of saying much and implying more, in one or two strokes of expression, he is rivaled by none. Tacitus has shown a frantic people, under the Pretorian bands and German legions, fighting for anarchy, not for civil gov-

ment. A profound judge of men and a severe censor of manners, Tacitus has delineated the characters and inward frame of the vile and profligate, as well as the recompense of the virtuous which the good and upright receive. He pronounces sentences against bad men and evil deeds, with the firmness of an upright judge who practised the virtue which he commends. Tacitus had a thorough knowledge of all the modes of government then in the world; he was versed in civil affairs; he knew the policy of statesmen and he read men as well as books. Tacitus, in his history, judges the actions of men, that the worthy and good may meet with the reward due to eminent virtue, and that pernicious citizens may be deterred by the condemnation which waits on evil deeds at the tribunal of posterity.

ANNALS.—The first form of government that prevailed in Rome, was monarchy. Liberty and the consularship were established by Lucius Junius Brutus. Dictators were created only in sudden emergencies. The jurisdiction of the decemvirs did not extend beyond two years; and the consular authority of the military tribunes soon expired. When the spirit of adulation grew epidemic, the dignity of the historic character was lost. Roman republicanism ended with Brutus and Cassius. The partisans of Julius Caesar had no leader but Octavius, who laid aside the invidious title of triumvir, content with the more popular name of consul, and with the tribunitian power, which he professed to assume for the protection of the people. In a little time, when he had allured to his interest the soldiery by a profusion of largesses, and the people by a distribution of corn, and the minds of men in general by the sweets of peace, his views grew more aspiring. By degrees and almost imperceptibly, he drew into his hands the authority of the senate, the functions of the magistrates and the administration of the laws. A show of liberty was held forth, fair in appearance, but deceitful and for that reason tending to plunge mankind into deeper servitude.

"To grow proud in office is the nature of man." By this specious argument, delivered with republican spirit, Tiberius strengthened the interests of despotism.—Tiberius had all the arts of a subtle and disguised politician. He knew that by depriving the people of the last remnant of liberty, their right to a voice in the election of magistrates, and vesting it in the senate, he could establish his own absolute power. The senate, at all times, adverse to the claims of the people, saw with pleasure the annihilation of a restless, factions and turbulent democracy; never once reflecting that their order, unsupported by the people, could make but a feeble resistance to the will of a despotic prince.—Tiberius lived on the rack of guilt and his wounded spirit groaned in agony.

Among the calamities of that black period, the most trying grievance, was the degenerate spirit with which the first men in the senate submitted to the drudgery of common informers; some, without a blush in the face of day; and others by clandestine artifices. The contagion was epidemic. Informers struggled, as it were, in a race, who should first ruin his man. The wrath of heaven was bent against the Roman state.

HISTORY.—After the battle of Actium, when to close the scene of civil distraction, all power and authority were surrendered to a single ruler, the historic character disappeared and genius died by the same blow that ended public liberty. Truth was reduced to the last gasp and various circumstances conspired against her. A new constitution took place, undefined and little understood. Avarice accumulated riches. Contentions arose between the senate and the people. Factions tribunes prevailed at one time and ambitious consuls at another. In the heart of the city and even in the forum, the sword of discord was drawn and those dissensions were a prelude to civil war.

TREATISE ON THE SITUATION, MANNERS AND PEOPLE OF GERMANY.—Among the [ancient] Germans, the passion for liberty is attended with this ill-consequence: when a public meeting is announced, they never assemble at the stated time. Regularity would look like obedience. The king, or chief of the community, opens the debate; the rest are heard in their turn, according to age, nobility of descent, renown in war, or fame for eloquence. No man dictates to the assembly; he may persuade, but he cannot command.

NOTE.—Montesquien says, "The ancient Germans established monarchy and liberty; subordination and freedom; the prerogative of the prince and the rights of the subject; all united in so bold a combination, that the fabric in some places stands to this hour, the wonder of mankind. The British Constitution, came out of the woods of Germany."

LIFE of AGRICOLA.—To transmit to posterity the lives and characters of eminent men, was an office frequently performed in ancient times. Even in the present age, incursions as it is about its own concerns, the same good custom has prevailed, whenever a great and splendid virtue has been able to surmount those two pernicious vices, which not only infest small communities, but are likewise the bane of large and flourishing communities:—insensibility to merit, on the one hand, and envy, on the other.—Agricola's ingenuous disposition guarded him against the seductions of pleasure. To know the province and make himself known to the army; to learn from men of experience and emulate the best examples; to seek no enterprise with a forward spirit, and to decline none with timid caution, were the rules he laid down to himself; prudent with valor and brave without ostentation. By being vigorous in action, and modest in the report of his exploits, he gained a brilliant reputation, secure from the envy that attends it. In the council of the province, or on the tribunal of justice, he discharged the duties of his station with awful gravity, intent to inquire, often severe, but more inclined to soften the rigor of the law. The little ambition of rising above his colleagues was foreign to his heart. Agricola was well acquainted with the manners and national character of the Britons; he knew that conquest, while it loads the vanquished with injury and oppression, can never be secure and permanent.

DIALOGUE on ORATORY.—If it be wisdom to make the ornament and happiness of life, the end and aim of our actions, what can be more advisable than to embrace an art by which we are enabled to protect our friends; to defend the cause of strangers, and succor the distressed? Nor is this all: the eminent orator is a terror to his enemies; envy and malice tremble while they hate him. Secure in his own strength, he knows how to ward off every danger. His own genius is his protection; a perpetual guard that watches him; an invincible power that shields him from his enemies. When the orator, upon some great occasion, comes with a well digested speech, conscious of its matter, and animated by his subject, his breast expands and heaves with emotions, unfelt before. In his joy there is a dignity suited to the weight and energy of the composition he has prepared. Does he rise to hazard himself in a sudden debate? He is alarmed for himself, but in that very alarm, there is a mixture of pleasure, which predominates until distress itself becomes delightful. The mind exults in the prompt exertion of its powers, and even glories in its rashness. The productions of genius and those of the field have this resemblance: many things are sown and brought to maturity with toil and care; yet that which grows from the wild vigor of nature has the most grateful flavor.—In my humble station, I find that innocence is a better shield than oratory. To me, woods, groves and solitary places, afford sensations of purest delight. It is there I enjoy the pleasures of a poetic imagination: and among those pleasures it is not the least, that they are pursued far from the noise and bustle of the world, without a client to besiege my doors, and not a criminal to distress me with the tears of affliction. Free from those distractions, the poet retires to scenes of solitude, where peace and innocence reside. In those haunts of contemplation, he has pleasing visions. He treads on consecrated ground. It was there eloquence first grew up and there she reared her temple. In those retreats she first adorned herself with those graces which have made mankind enamored of her charms; and there she filled the hearts of the wise and good with joy and inspiration.—Eloquent orators agree in this, that their eloquence is manly, sound and vigorous. He alone deserves the name of an orator, who can speak in a copious style, with ease or dignity, as the subject requires; who can find language to decorate his argument; who through the passions can command the understanding; and while he serves mankind, knows how to delight the judgment and imagination of his audience. The true spirit of genuine eloquence, like an intense fire, is kept alive by fresh materials: every new emotion gives it vigor, and in proportion as it burns, it expands and brightens to a purer flame. Tempestuous times called forth the genius of our ancestors. It is war that produces the soldier and the great commander. It is the same with eloquence. The oftener she is obliged to take the field, and the more formidable her adversaries, the more she rises in pomp and grandeur and returns from the warfare of the forum, crowned with unfading laurels.

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